

Message Text

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ACTION SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /016 W

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Z 211613Z NOV 74 ZFF4

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 1481

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EYES ONLY FOR UNDER SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS SISCO

PASS FLASH TO SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR LE US

SUBJECT: FRANGIE PIQUE

1. TELEVISION LAST NIGHT AND PRESS TODAY CONTINUE TO HAVE A FIELD DAY WITH FRANGIE'S TREATMENT IN NEW YORK AND PRESIDENT'S PIQUE THEREFROM. MOST SPECULATION CENTERS ON WHETHER I WILL ATTEND PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION FOR DIPLO-MATIC CORPS TOMORROW NOVEMBER 22 WHICH IS LEBANESE INDEPENDENCE DAY.

2. UP TO NOW, PRESS AND PUBLIC ATTENTION HAS BEEN FOCUSING ON PROTOCOL ASPECTS OF PRESIDENT FRANGIE'S VISIT TO NEW YORK, THE FACT THAT HE WAS NOT RECEIVED BY PRESIDENT FORD, AND TAQLA'S NOT BEING ABLE TO SEE THE SECRETARY. WE HAVE, HOWEVER, RELIABLE INFORMATION THAT THE FACT DOGS SNIFFED PRESIDENTIAL BAGGAGE FOR HASHISH IS NOW LEAKING, AND TWO RESPONSIBLE AND CONCERNED LEBANESE OFFICIALS ANTICIPATE THAT IT WILL APPEAR IN PRESS WITHIN 24-48 HOURS.

3. PRESIDENT'S INTRINSIGENCE CONTINUES AND HE IS, LET'S FACE IT, NEARLY IRRATIONAL ON THE SUBJECT. MEN WHO ATTENDED YESTERDAY'S CABINET MEETING SAID HE NEARLY LOST CONTROL OF HIMSELF WHILE SPEAKING SOLELY OF PROTOCOL ASPECTS OF HIS NY RECEPTION.

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4. PROBLEM IS OBVIOUSLY HOW TO DEFUSE SITUATION AND STOP PRESS/TV SPECULATION FROM SPIRALING. QUESTION TODAY TOOK ON ANOTHER ASPECT--I.E., WITH PRESS ALLEGING THAT TENSION IN US/LEBANESE RELATIONS ALSO BORE ON OUR "FAILURE" TO RESTRAIN ISRAELI ACTIONS ON SOUTHERN BORDER.

5. SOMETHING SLIGHTLY DRAMATIC MUST BE DONE TO SAVE PRESIDENT FRANGIE'S FACE, WHICH IS TOTALLY ENGAGED AT THIS TIME. WE SHOULD ALSO DO SOMETHING TO ABATE PRESS FUROR AND GIVE THE MANY WELL DISPOSED ELEMENTS IN THE LEBANON A CHANCE TO QUIET THINGS DOWN. ONE THING I CAN RECOMMEND STRONGLY IS THAT I BE AUTHORIZED TO RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES BEFORE PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION TOMORROW, OR ABOUT THE SAME TIME, ON CONSULTATION. EMBASSY WOULD INDICATE TOMORROW MORNING LOCAL THAT I WAS LEAVING BEIRUT TOMORROW MORNING FOR WASHINGTON "TO EXCHANGE IDEAS DIRECTLY WITH RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES RE THE RECENT VISIT OF PRESIDENT FRANGIE TO THE UN IN NEW YORK." IF FOREGOING MAKES SENSE, I WOULD ALSO HAVE TO OBTAIN A QUASI-GUARANTEE FROM FRANGIE THAT HE WOULD RECEIVE ME UPON MY RETURN, AT WHICH TIME I COULD MAKE FURTHER APOLOGIES AND CONCILIATORY REMARKS. HIS FACE WOULD BE SAVED, AND HOPEFULLY HE WOULD BE WILLING TO LAY THE MATTER TO REST.

6. MY OWN CONVICTION IS THAT TODAY INFORMED RESPONSIBLE LEBANESE, INCLUDING PRESIDENT'S IMMEDIATE ADVISORS, EXCEPT RPT EXCEPT FRANGIE REALIZE THE UNTENABLE POSITION HE HAS GOTTEN HIMSELF INTO. FOR THE LIFE OF ME, I CAN THINK OF NO RPT NO OTHER ACTION THAT CAN BE TAKEN TO STOP SPIRALING STIUATION WHICH BENEFITS ONLY OUR MUTUAL ADVERSARIES IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD.

7. I AM FULLY APPRECIATIVE OF THE FACT THAT FOREGOING WOULD CAUSE SOME STIR IN THE LEBANON AND POSSIBLY EVEN IN U.S. PRESS CIRCLES.

I AM CONVINCED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS STIR WOULD BE MUCH LESS THAN THAT WHICH I CURRENTLY ENVISAGE WILL INEVITABLY HAPPEN UNLESS WE TAKE SOME ACTION.

GODLEY

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NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECRETARY.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGES, DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL, POLITICAL SITUATION, NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS, PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CollinP0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BEIRUT14027
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740337-0593
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741125/aaaaavak.tel
Line Count: 109
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CollinP0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUL 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <21 MAR 2003 by CollinP0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRANGIE PIQUE
TAGS: PFOR, LE, US, (GODLEY, G MCMURTRIE), (FRANGIE, SULEIMAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005